



First Class 17 Day Package

Italy & Germany

Day 1: Depart USA

Overnight flight to Italy.

Day 2: Arrive Rome

We arrive at the Rome airport and transfer our lodging for the next three nights. This afternoon we will take an afternoon tour of the Catacombs where thousands of Christians were buried in a remarkable tiered series of galleries.

Day 3: Forum, Mamertine, Coliseum, Ostia Antica

We begin our walking tour at the ancient Roman Forum, where

our guide will divulge its secrets. We will visit the Arch of Titus which commemorated the sack of Jerusalem by Titus in AD 70. We will view the Mamertine Prison exterior, where tradition says the Apostle Paul was imprisoned. The Roman church would say that Peter was imprisoned here as well, but there is no imperial evidence that Peter was ever in Rome. Next, we visit the Coliseum, where thousands of people and animals perished during gladiatorial games. The Coliseum first opened in AD 80 and within 100 days of its opening, 5000 wild beasts perished here. The slaughter of both humans and animals continued for three more centuries. Historians believe the Coliseum could hold between 40,000 and



80,000 people depending on how close the seating was. The floor has recently had a plank placed over the middle making it accessible for people to walk over the labyrinth of brick cells, ramps, and elevators used to transport animals and gladiators into the arena. Hear the stories of the games that have fascinated people for hundreds of years. We conclude our day at the ruins of Ostia Antica, which provides an excellent example of city life in classical times and the Ostian Gate, today called the Gate of St. Paul.

Day 4: Vatican Museums, St. Peter's, Scala Santa, Abbey of Three Fountains, St. Paul Outside the Wall

After breakfast you will begin a full day of sightseeing. First visit Vatican City where you will see the Basilica at St. Peter, the Sistine Chapel and the Vatican Museums with stunning works of art at every turn. After some free time for lunch, you will stop at The Abbey of the Three Fountains, the traditional site of Paul's martyrdom and the ancient street that he walked on. Next, visit the 4th century Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls, the site of Paul's tomb, and the Scala Santa, where Martin Luther made his stand against the practice of indulgences. This fascinating museum houses the Steps from Pilot's Judgment Hall in Jerusalem brought to Rome by Helena, the mother of Constantine. Additional sights include the Arches of Constantine and Titus, Circus Maximus and the beautiful marble monument called the Wedding Cake.

Day 5: Frescoes, Assisi, Florence

After breakfast you will say "Arrivederci Roma" and board your coach and travel through scenic Umbria to the ancient walled hillside village of Assisi. After lunch on your own, you will enjoy a guided tour of this beautiful, medieval town, which will include the Basilica San Francesco, decorated with some of the most renowned frescoes in the world. The stories of the sacrificial life of St. Francis will be an encouragement to us all. Our home for the next two evenings is in the beautiful city of Florence, the heart of charming Tuscany.

Day 6: Beautiful Florence, Michelangelo's David

You will spend the morning enjoying a guided tour of Florence, one of the world's greatest artistic capitals, which will include the Piazza della Signoria, Duomo, Baptistry and a visit to the Accademia Galley, home of Michelangelo's David. A stop will also be made on the hillside overlook across the river from Florence where we will enjoy a panoramic view of the beautiful red-tiled roof cityscape. This afternoon is at your leisure to enjoy shopping, visiting more galleries or strolling on the famous Pont Vecchio, the old bridge which spans the Arno River. Remember that Florence leather shops are the best in the world and bargains on excellent quality goods are abundant. It may be the time to purchase those special Christmas gifts.

Day 7: Pisa & Verona

The sightseeing this morning includes a tour of Pisa where you will visit the Baptistry, Duomo and the famous leaning tower in the Piazza dei Miracoli. This afternoon we stop in romantic Verona, medieval setting of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, with a walk through the historic center/shopping district to see the famed balcony of Juliet. Our lodging for the next two evenings will be in Venice Mestre.

Day 8: Charming Venice

Start the morning sightseeing in style as your guide takes you by private boat along the Giudecca canal to meet your resident expert. Highlights of your walking tour are St. Mark's Square and the Byzantine splendor of St. Mark's Basilica, lavish Doges' Palace and the Bridge of Sighs. Afterwards enjoy Venice at your own pace, or join an optional gondola ride through the picturesque canal system, visit the many charming shops and take photos galore.

Day 9: Innsbruck

This morning we depart and head north, towards the towering

alps. Make sure to have your camera ready for pictures of the majestic mountains. We arrive in Innsbruck, capital of Austrian Tyrol. A walking tour this afternoon will include the Triumphal Arch commemorating the wedding of the Duke of Tuscany, Saint Anna's Column and Swarovski Kristallwelten, a wonderland of crystal works of art by artists past and present.

Day 10: Neuschwanstein, Oberammergau

This morning we have some free time to explore Innsbruck on our own. Next we visit the fairy-tale castle, Neuschwanstein Castle. We take a guided tour of Ludwig II's most luxurious former residence where the interior styles range from Byzantine to Romanesque to Gothic. This castle, built between 1869 and 1886, has a most impressive view with the Alpsee Lake below and the Alps towering above. We continue to the Pilgrimage Church of Wies to visit this oval Rococo style church which is a UNESCO World Heritage site. From here we continue to Oberammergau or surrounding area for dinner and overnight stay.

Day 11: Passion Play Performance

This morning we will have some free time to enjoy the delightful village of Oberammergau with outstanding opportunities for photos and shopping. This afternoon and evening we enjoy the Passion Play production. The play depicts the story of Christ's Passion, beginning with the entry into Jerusalem and ending with the resurrection and transfiguration, a moving and spectacular experience. Each performance starts at 2:30 PM (1:30 PM start time after August 17th) and ends approximately 10:30 PM (9:30 PM after August 17th), with a three-hour included dinner break/intermission from 5:00 to 8:00 PM (4:00 to 7:00 PM after August 17th). We stay overnight in Oberammergau or surrounding area.

Day 12: Augsburg, Rothenberg

This morning we travel north to the ancient city of Augsburg, the

place where the Augsburg Confession was presented. Our morning drive will allow for time to rehearse this important document and digest the tremendous meaning it has as the basis for much of our doctrine today. It was also here in 1518 at St. Anne's Church that Luther met the papal legate, Cardinal Cajetan, who demanded that Luther submit to the pope. Augsburg was also the site of another Imperial Diet (1530). This afternoon we travel the panoramic "Romantic Road" and visit the best preserved medieval town in all of Europe, Rothenberg ob der Tauber. We see the quaint Rathaus (town hall) with its impressive tower and have free time for coffee and shopping in the many delightful shops. You may choose to visit on your own the Kriminal-museum, housing all manner of Medieval instruments of torture. Overnight in Rothenberg.

Day 13: Heidelberg, Worms, Mainz

This morning we travel to one of the most charming cities in all of the world - Heidelberg, ancient capital of the Palatinate and home of Germany's oldest university. But most importantly, it was a stronghold of German Reformed Protestants beginning in 1560. One of the great confessional statements of the Reformation, the Heidelberg Catechism was produced here in 1563. We tour Heidelberg Castle, a most impressive historic landmark of Germany that stands majestically overlooking the Neckar River. The structure, now largely in ruins, preserves numerous examples of Medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque German architecture. Our next stop is in Worms. It was here, during the Imperial Diet in 1521, that Martin Luther challenged the entire Roman Catholic establishment by his refusal to recant the great doctrines of Protestantism. It was also here that William Tyndale completed the printing of his English version of the New Testament in 1525 which he had begun in Cologne. After seeing St. Peter's Church and the symbolic Luther memorial near the town square, we transfer to Mainz. In Mainz we view the Gutenberg Monument



and then visit the Gutenberg Museum to learn about printing from the moveable metal type and see a Gutenberg Bible. We overnight in Frankfurt.

Day 14: Coburg, Eisenach

Wasting no time today we immediately set out through scenic Thuringer Wald to view the fortress of Coburg know as Veste, the place of Luther's imprisonment in 1530. Next we visit Eisenach, birthplace of Johann Sebastian Bach. It was here at the formidable Wartburg Castle that Luther, under "house arrest", translated the New Testament into the German language in 1523. We visit the castle and see where Luther spent his time. We end out day in Erfurt for dinner and overnight.

Day 15: Erfurt, Eisleben

This morning we spend time in Erfurt where Luther attended the university. A highlight will be the Augustinian Monastery where he spent his early years as a monk. Leaving Erfurt we visit Eisleben which is noted among the most significant in Luther's history; he was born here in 1483 and died here in 1546 and old manuscripts indicate that he felt a special affinity to Eisleben. We will see the house of his birth and death, St. Andrews Church where he preached his last sermon, the Luther Monument, and St. Anne's Church with the famous Biblical scenes hewn in stone and many other sites. We continue to Wittenberg for dinner and overnight.

Day 16: Wittenberg, Berlin

We continue the Reformation Trail today with a visit to Wittenberg where Martin Luther lived and taught for 36 years. You will see the Castle Church door where Luther posted his 95 Theses, giving birth to the Reformation and the Town Church where he preached. We visit the Luther House which is the greatest museum of Reformation History in the world. This afternoon we transfer to Berlin for a short tour of the Berlin Wall, Brandenburg Gate, and Checkpoint Charlie. Overnight in Berlin.

Day 17: Departure

We transfer to the airport for our return flight.

PRICE PER PERSON:
BASED ON DOUBLE OCCUPANCY

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Wittenberg



Passion Play



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